

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

In Act 44, (H. 427), An Act Making Miscellaneous Amendments to Education Law, high school completion is highlighted with a goal of increasing high school graduation to 100 percent by 2020. There are several provisions directed towards strengthening support for at risk students.

- 16 V.S.A. § 2903 has been amended to direct educational support teams (ESTs) to determine which enrolled students require additional assistance to be successful in school, based upon indicators set forth in guidelines developed by the Commissioner of Education. The ESTs are also directed to develop individual strategy plans, in collaborations with the student's parents or legal guardian if possible, to assist identified students in completing high school.
- 16 V.S.A. § 1094(a) expands the high school completion program by providing for the participation of students who are still enrolled, in a public or approved private school, in graduation education plans. Previously only students who were no longer enrolled in school were eligible for the high school completion program. Establishes the goal of a 100% high school completion rate by 2020. Students who are not enrolled in a traditional school settings may work towards completion of the graduation plan with a "contracting agency" that provides adult education services. Upon completion of such a plan, the student will be awarded a high school diploma in the student's district of residence.
- The legislature directed the Commissioner to: develop and publish guidelines for developing graduation completion plans; develop and publish guidelines to identify and support elementary and high school students who require support or who could benefit from alternative pathways to graduation; evaluate existing practices and programs in Vermont schools to support success and graduation; and identify those schools that need assistance to begin or enhance school completion programs and practices.
- The Commissioner is also directed to developing an accurate, uniform and reliable method for defining and measuring high school completion rates on a school by school basis and set benchmarks for assessing schools progress towards increasing the school completion rate to 100 percent by 2020. Every year up to 2020 the Commissioner must report the states progress towards this goal to the legislature and schools must also report their progress to the electorate when school budgets are presented for approval.

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TRUANCY

Act 44, (H. 427), An Act Making Miscellaneous Amendments to Education Law, also included the following provisions:

Sec. 46. TRUANCY

(a) On or before September 30, 2009, and in consultation and coordination with the executive director of the department of state's attorneys and sheriffs, interested judges of the Vermont district courts, and school district personnel, the commissioner of education shall develop and publish on the department of education's website comprehensive model truancy protocols consistent with the provisions of 16 V.S.A. chapter 25, subchapter 3, that confront truancy on a statewide, countywide, and supervisory union wide basis and include the post-complaint involvement of both state's attorneys and the court system under 16 V.S.A. § 1127.

(b) On or before December 15, 2009, the commissioner shall propose to the house and senate committees on education any legislative amendments or additions necessary to implement the purposes of this section.

(c) The commissioner shall ensure that, on or before July 1, 2010, the supervisory unions in each county adopt truancy policies that are consistent with and carry forward the purposes of this section.

(d) On or before January 15, 2011, the commissioner shall report to the house and senate committees on education regarding implementation of this section.

On September 6, 2009, the Commissioner posted two model truancy protocols from Rutland County and Chittenden County and requested comments on the protocols as well as the current truancy statutes. The comment period closed on November 5, 2009. The legislative report required under Section 46 (b) above is pending.

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